RFMD forms Advanced Development Group

RF Micro Devices Inc (Greensboro, NC, USA) has formed an Advanced Development Group to focus on R&D of next-generation RFIC design, process and packaging technology. Victor Steel (previously director of the power amplifier product line) will head the new group.

* After opening design centres in Scotts Valley, CA, Cedar Rapids, IA and Boston, MA in April, June and October 1999, RFMD has opened its fourth (a 6,000 ft^2 facility in Chandler, AZ, USA). The centre will develop linear power amps, Bluetooth and other RFICs for cellular and PCS phones using GaAs HBT and MESFET, silicon bipolar and BiCMOS, and SiGe process technologies.

* After establishing its first Asia-Pacific sales and support team in Taiwan in April (where there is "tremendous growth potential in consumer wireless, especially cell-phone handset and WLAN manufacturing"), RFMD has established its first European sales and support centre in Reading, UK, targeting designers and developers of GSM handsets.

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Conexant's new design centre

Conexant System Inc has opened a 1800 m^2 Chelmsford RFIC design centre near Boston, MA, USA. It includes a 360m^2 engineering test lab and over 50 engineers and technicians for the design of power amps, receivers/transmitters and RF subsystems for Bluetooth, GPS and spread spectrum digital cordless phone markets as well as GSM, CDMA and TDMA digital cell phones. RF multi-chip packaging enables mixing and matching between SiGe, BiCMOS, silicon bipolar, mixed-signal CMOS, RF CMOS, GaAs HBT and MESFET technology.

* Conexant has launched its first range of SiGe ICs for RF receive/transmit. They are designed to integrate with existing power amplifier modules, baseband analogue processors with integrated codecs, and power management devices to form a complete radio for a 2G (cdmaOne) and 3G (cdma2000 and W-CDMA) dual-band, tri-mode digital cell-phone handsets.

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Kopin to expand to two fabs: 22 HBT systems

In April Kopin Corp (Taunton, MA, USA) reported Q1/2000 GaAs sales up 179% from Q1/99 (to US$16.435m) and up 48% sequentially.

In May, after completing the first phase of its fab expansion with the installation of six new HBT systems, Kopin announced a US$20m investment to establish a second HBT fab in an existing 60,000 ft^2 building (secured with assistance from the local economic development office) on John Hancock Drive in the Myles Standish Industrial Park (1.5 miles from the current 25,000 ft^2 fab and HQ). The fab should be operational by October and generate about 40% of Kopin's HBT output by Q1/2001. Eight more HBT systems (between the Taunton and Hancock fabs) will bring the total installed to 16 by end-2000 (including multi-wafer 6″).

In addition, in June Kopin ordered six AIXTRON AIX 2600G3 MOCVD systems for HBTs, for delivery in 2001 to both fabs. This will give Kopin 22 machines in total: eight for 4″ wafers and 14 for 6″. This will increase 4″capacity by 33% to more than 400,000 wafers per year and 6″ by 67% to 200,000 wpy.

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Celeritek's record orders

For fiscal Q4/2000 Celeritek Inc (Santa Clara, CA, USA) has reported revenues of US$15.47m (53% up on Q4/99, including semiconductor components up 120% - mainly power amplifiers for handsets - and defence down 74%).

Record orders of almost US$48m include:

- US$10m from "a major US handset manufacturer" for power amplifiers for CDMA handsets (this follows a US$8.5m order in January);
- GaAs components for wireless infrastructure from Metricom and Ericsson, and
- a further nine design wins for Celeritek's TrueTriangle family of 3V InGaP-HBT linear efficient power amplifier modules.

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